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19 November 1963

DOS review(s) completed.

LAOS WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT
(Information as of 1000 EST 19 November)

I. Political

A. Kong Le and General Singkapo agree on cease-fire:

1. Neutralist commander Kong Le and Pathet Lao military chief Singkapo Chounramany met on 16 November on the Plaine des Jarres and agreed to a cease-fire. Details of the agreement are to be worked out at succeeding meetings, scheduled to be held twice weekly--Tuesdays and Saturdays. An announced aim of the talks is to "create a favorable atmosphere" for an eventual meeting of Premier Souvanna Phouma and Pathet Lao leader Prince Souphannouvong.
2. Reasons behind the Pathet Lao willingness to negotiate are unclear. The Pathet Lao may be seeking a temporary detente to provide them time to prepare for broader military ventures or they may be hoping to undermine the neutralist-rightist alliance by offering minor concessions to the neutralists.
3. It is unlikely that the cease-fire will bring a halt to all fighting on the Plaine (already there are reports of shelling there in violation of the agreement), and its duration is uncertain and tenuous.

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II. MILITARY

- A. Fighting slows on the Plaine des Jarres: Even before the 16 November cease-fire, fighting in the Plaine des Jarres area had ebbed. Neutralist forces, encountering stiff resistance and running into logistics problems, had broken off their effort to gain control over the Dong Danh-Lat Houang region southeast of the Plaine des Jarres.
- B. Right-wing forces continue pressure on Xieng Khouang Town:
 - 1. Right-wing regular and guerrilla forces continue their pressure against Xieng Khouang Town, possibly in an effort to relieve the strain on Meo elements attempting to retake their former strongpoint at Tha Lin Noi,

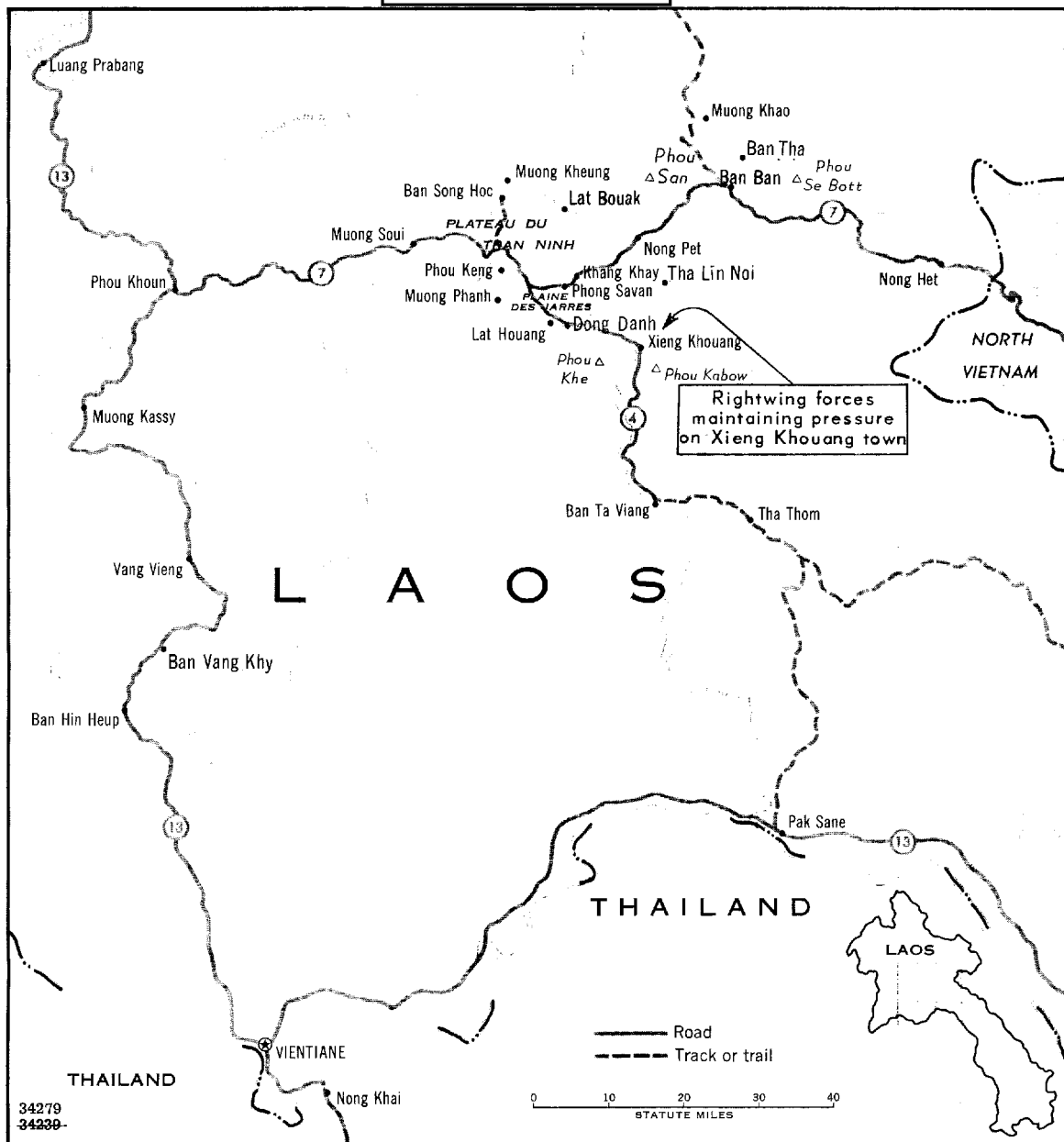
16 kilometers northeast of Xieng Khouang Town. Guerrilla forces are positioned on Phou Khe to the west of the town and have taken several posts on Phou Kabow to the southeast. Two regular rightist battalions, BI-13 and BI-22, remain just to the east and northeast of Xieng Khouang Town.

2. The leftist garrison in the town, however, remains intact and apparently capable of resisting any right-wing push. Key outposts have been retained, and--most important--its Route 4 supply line from Khang Khay remains open for convoy traffic.

C. Other areas:

1. Neutralist forces reportedly are continuing their activity in the Vang Vieng area in an effort to clean out Pathet Lao forces. On 15 November, Souvanna told the US ambassador he had authorized these moves against the Pathets, who, he said, had been "constantly pricking us."
2. In the Nhommarath region, Pathet Lao and neutralist-rightist forces continue to jockey for position. Recent Pathet Lao patrols have been active up to 10 kilometers north of Nhommarath along Route 8 toward the neutralist headquarters at Na Kay. (Map)

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